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Dear Secretary Schramm:

Thank you for your letter of January 16th to Assistant Secretary Watson concerning Delaware law pertaining to burial and cremation of remains within Delaware.

The next of kin of the Guyana deceased are currently claiming bodies and removing them from Delaware. As of today, approximately 325 bodies have been removed from the Dover Air Force Base Mortuary. Of the bodies that remain on the base some 210 are children who have not been identified.

Let me assure you, as Assistant Secretary Watson has assured Governor du Pont and other Delaware officials, there will be no "mass burial" of the Guyana deceased in Delaware. The Department considers the disposition of the remains of the identified deceased to be a private matter and the responsibility of the next of kin. We have sent letters to the next of kin advising them to this effect.

In an effort to assist the next of kin we have been attempting to ascertain what the laws of Delaware and surrounding states are regarding burial and cremation. It was with this in mind that we undertook a series of discussions with Delaware officials regarding Delaware law. To this end, we are making every effort to obtain the necessary documents to satisfy, not only Delaware law, but also the laws on burial and cremation for the surrounding states.

Sincerely,

Lois M. Day
Director Designate
Office of Citizens Consular Services

Honorable Patricia C. Schramm
Secretary of Health and Social Services
New Castle, Delaware 19720